



Richmond Metropolitan
Habitat for Humanity



Jonathan T.M. Reckford Biography cont'd

A graduate from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and the Stanford University Graduate School of Business, Reckford spent several years in the for-profit sector, including stints at Goldman Sachs, the Walt Disney Co., and Circuit City Stores. Following a tenure as executive pastor at Christ Presbyterian Church near Minneapolis, Minn., Reckford was unanimously appointed CEO by Habitat for Humanity's international board of directors in 2005 and sees in the housing ministry the perfect opportunity to live out his "life verse" of Micah 6:8, which reads, "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Based in Atlanta, where he lives with his wife Ashley and their three children, Reckford has written a book titled *Creating a Habitat for Humanity: No Hands But Yours*, which—framed around the verse from Micah—explores the issues of housing and a personal call to respond on behalf of those in need of shelter.

The Need for a Land Bank as part of RMHFH's Land Acquisition Strategy

In central Virginia, we consume land at an alarming rate. According to a recent report from the Southern Environmental Law Center and Virginia LISC, the "Greater Richmond area faces a growing shortage of affordable housing. The median value of owner-occupied housing in the region rose by \$60,000 per house between 2000 and 2005. This is an increase of over 50% in just five years."

"Similarly, land prices have increased at an average rate of 10% a year for the past five years. In the same amount of time, almost 59,000 acres were developed in this region. At that rate, **more land will be developed in the greater Richmond region in the next 20 years than in the previous 400.** But land is a finite resource. The demand for land and the limited supply of it mean only one thing—land prices will continue to escalate. Accordingly, sound fiscal management of Richmond Habitat's resources dictates that we purchase land now for use in the future," says Laura Lafayette, Richmond Association of REATORS, Senior VP of Public Affairs & MLS, and Richmond Habitat Board member.

"Yes, Richmond Habitat can and is doing its part to control sprawl by pursuing infill development opportunities. But affordable housing opportunities are needed in all of the localities we serve, not just the City and the inner ring suburban neighborhoods where in-fill opportunities are more plentiful. To make possible these housing opportunities in the more rural areas we serve, we must make strategic land purchases now. Land banking is Richmond Habitat's insurance policy; purchasing land now preserves our ability to continue our mission for many years to come," says Ms. Lafayette.

With a projected need for 125,000 new housing units needed by the year 2030, Richmond Habitat is preparing to meet these challenges for our homeowners. A RMHFH major initiative is the creation of a "Land Bank". Getting its start through 22 parcels donated in December, Richmond Habitat has crystallized a land acquisition strategy – to publicly call for donated land, and/or monies to purchase land, offsetting skyrocketing infrastructure costs. Help us make that call for action, and